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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1481
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001467

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA;
DS/IP/NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/10/2016

TAGS: KPAL KWBG PREL IS

SUBJECT: PSO FORCES HAMAS LEADERS TO LOSE FACE IN TWO
SEPARATE INCIDENTS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In two separate incidents, Preventive Security Organization (PSO) officers in Gaza initiated symbolic confrontations with HAMAS Prime Minister Isma'il Hanniyah and Interior Minister Said Siam. In both cases, the HAMAS officials backed down rather than escalate the altercation with the PSO. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On April 8, PSO officers refused to allow PM Isma'il Hanniyah's convoy to pass through the Gaza City street where the PSO Gaza headquarters is located. PM Hanniyah was returning home following his meeting with President Abbas. PM Hanniyah ordered his guards to change course rather than escalate the situation into an open confrontation with the PSO. ConGen contacts in the President's office in Gaza City reported that the PSO Chief Rashid Abu Shabak apologized to PM Hanniyah privately and promised to take measures to ensure that no such incidents occurred in the future.

¶3. (C) In a separate incident on April 9, PSO officers refused to allow Interior Minister Said Siam to enter PSO headquarters with his bodyguards. The PSO officers reportedly refused to allow Siam's armed guards to enter the facility on legal grounds, stating that the bodyguards were armed civilians and not affiliated with any security apparatus. Siam reportedly relented, entering the facility without his security escorts.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The PSO is manned by Fatah members, many of whom are close to the former Gaza PSO Chief, Muhammad Dahlan. They appear to be sending a message to their new nominal leadership that they have a mind of their own and are a force to be reckoned with. END COMMENT.

WALLES